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Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 SS-20 NSC-10

INT-08 TRSE-00 SCI-06 SCEM-02 DRC-01 /114 W
---------- 121404
R 141005Z NOV 73
FM AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2219
INFO AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMCONSUL LUANDA
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LOURENCO MARQUES 0799

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, MZ
SUBJ: GASOLINE RATIONING IMPOSED

1. SUMMARY. GASOLINE RATIONING, BASED ON PORTUGUESE SYSTEM, WAS INTRODUCED IN MOZAMBIQUE ON NOVEMBER 13. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER KEEPING SILENT ON LOCAL PETROLEUM SUPPLY PROBLEMS SINCE BEGINNING MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT NOVEMBER 13 ISSUED REGULATIONS -- APPARENTLY CLOSELY COPIED FROM METROPOLE -- ON GAS RATIONING. UNDER NEW RULES, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY; (1) GASOLINE DELIVERIES TO GAS STATIONS MAY BE REDUCED UP TO 25 PERCENT; (2) GAS STATIONS, EXCEPT FOR SOME ON MAIN HIGHWAYS, CLOSED ON SATURDAY, SUNDAY AND HOLIDAYS; (3) WITHIN 25 KM. OF TOWNS, MAXIMUM OF 20 LITERS FOR LIGHT CARS; (4) GAS MAY ONLY BE SOLD DIRECTLY INTO GAS TANKS; (5) EXCEPTIONS MADE FOR MEDICAL VEHICLES AND TAXIS; (6) MAXIMUM SPEED LIMIT OF 80 KM. PER HOUR; (7) CAR RACING SUSPENDED; (8) KEROSENE SALES TO BE LIMITED AS NECESSARY; (9) BUTANE GAS DELIVERIES TO INDIVIDUALS NOT TO EXCEED USUAL LEVELS; NO NEW
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DELIVERY CONTRACTS TO BE MADE; (10) MEASURES TO BE DRAWN UP

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ON USE OF PETROLEUM BY AIRCRAFT, SHIPS, AND RAILWAYS; (11)
RETAIL GASOLINE PRICES RAISED IN LOURENCO MARQUES TO ESCUDOS
7.50 FOR SUPER, 6.50 FOR REGULAR, 3.14 FOR DIESEL FUEL, UP
FROM 5.90 FOR SUPER, 5.00 FOR REGULAR, AND 2.55 FOR DIESEL;
PROPORTIONAL INCREASES IN INTERIOR WHERE ORIGINAL PRICES HIGHER.

3. IMMEDIATE RESULT OF ANNOUNCEMENT, MADE ON NOONTIME RADIO,
WAS BUYERS RUSH WHICH EXHAUSTED MOST GAS STATION STOCKS
BY 5:00 P.M. SOME SUSPICION, HOWEVER, THAT DEALERS HOLDING
BACK ON GAS UNTIL PUMPS COULD BE ADJUSTED TO NEW PRICES.
NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER RESTRICTIONS APPLY TO CONSULAR CORPS.

4. ACCORDING JOHANNESBURG STAR, THREE TANKERS FROM PERSIAN
GULF CARRYING TOTAL OF 59,000 TONS CRUDE OIL, ARRIVED OR
SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE LOURENCO MARQUES DURING NOVEMBER, AND
EXISTING MOZAMBIQUE RESERVES GOOD FOR NORMAL REQUIREMENTS
(CIVILIAN AND MILITARY) FOR MORE THAN THREE MONTHS. SONAREP
REFINERY, WHICH HAS BEEN PLANNING MAJOR EXPANSION, HAS ALSO
BEEN PUTTING IN GREATLY INCREASED STORAGE CAPACITY OVER PAST
FEW YEARS, POSSIBLY WITH BOYCOTT PROBLEMS IN MIND. HOWEVER,
WE UNDERSTAND REFINERY CANNOT HANDLE ANGOLAN CRUDE WITHOUT
SIGNIFICANT MODIFICATIONS.

5. COMMENT: MOZAMBIQUE HAS TRAILED OTHER PARTS OF PORTUGUESE
WORLD IN FACING UP TO PETROLEUM CRISIS, AND ITS RESPONSE CAN
ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS IMITATIVE. SEEMS TO US ONLY REAL RATIONING
ITEM IN CAFETERIA OF RESTRICTIONS IS CUTBACK OF DELIVERIES
TO GAS STATIONS, IF IT IS IMPOSED; THE REST MERELY ENSURE THAT
THE PUBLIC WILL FIND IT MORE INCONVENIENT AND MORE EXPENSIVE
TO GET GAS. SINCE CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME, REAL PINCH MAY BE
FELT BY COUNTRIES TRADITIONALLY SUPPLIED BY MOZAMBIQUE REFINERY,
NOTABLY MALAWI, SWAZILAND AND RHODESIA. WE NOTE RHODESIA HAS
INSTITUTED GASOLINE RATIONING, AND HAS WITHDRAWN ITS NEWLY
ACQUIRED BOEING JETS FROM DOMESTIC ROUTES IN FAVOR OF OLD,
MORE ECONOMICAL, VISCOUNTS.
VAN OSS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GASOLINE, RATIONING, RETAIL PRICES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LOUREN00799
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LOURENCO MARQUES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731135/aaaaazgi.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25-Sep-2001 by rowellE0>; APPROVED <28-Nov-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GASOLINE RATIONING IMPOSED
TAGS: ENRG, MZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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